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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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This document consists of 2 pages  
No. 2 of 1 Copies, Series A

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE  
THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE  
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
ADMINISTRATOR, AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY PLANNING

In November 1966 we jointly initiated a study, subsequently named Project ARGO, to evaluate classified satellite photography from the standpoint of civilian agency needs. The work is now complete and I am forwarding under separate cover the final report of the project. The resource experts whom you assigned to this task have studied the material from the viewpoint of both their discipline and their knowledge of the interests of their parent agency. The document you will receive is their report to you on their individual findings. I think your team members are to be congratulated on the enthusiasm and dedication with which they have carried this through.

This has been a very profitable effort--as you read the investigators' reports I think you will agree that by-products of the present intelligence systems might be of service to you in your current operations. Of course, the uses suggested are still very tentative: the technical and administrative feasibility of the techniques must still be demonstrated; the reconnaissance system capabilities to give the coverage desired without interference with the primary mission must be considered; the exploitation costs and, if extra operations are necessary, other incremental costs must be determined; and the limitations imposed by security must be considered. Even so, the probability of current system utility seems sufficiently high to warrant our taking two more steps to fully exploit the work that has already been done by the ARGO team.

First, we ought to establish a mechanism whereby your agencies can routinely make your needs and interests known to the intelligence community. As a specific proposal for your consideration, I suggest we continue the ARGO Steering Committee as a Standing Committee

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which would (1) collect and consolidate the needs that each of you might have for some photography from the current systems, (2) see that these needs were made known to the intelligence community and (3) discuss procedures for handling classified photography for these purposes with the community. Your member on the steering committee could be the point of contact within your agency for the generation of uses to which the photography might be put. Mr. Helms has agreed to cooperate with such a group and to appoint a representative. It will of course be necessary for the committee to operate in close liaison with the Director of Central Intelligence in recognition of his statutory responsibility for the protection of intelligence sources and methods. I would propose that my office chair the committee until the activity gets well established. I would like to know your opinion on this, and if you agree, who your representative would be.

Second, as we intended when we initiated the program, I propose that each agency now evaluate the ARGO conclusions from the standpoint of its own interests and write a report on its findings. I think it is important to keep in mind that the ARGO team, because of its limited size and the short time available to it, may not have surfaced all the possible uses of this material, nor have demonstrated to your satisfaction those uses that they did identify. Thus, it may be that you will see additional applications or will want to initiate pilot studies to evaluate or further define some of the uses already proposed. Therefore, I suggest that your report emphasize the following points: (1) the identification of additional applications; (2) the elaboration of your requirements from the standpoint of geographic coverage, frequency of coverage, etc.; (3) the description of how you would use the coverage and of the benefit you would derive; and (4) the definition of "pilot" studies that you plan to undertake. I would appreciate having the results of your evaluation by 1 May. This report could then serve as your initial input to the activities of the Standing Committee.

Special Assistant to the President  
for Science and Technology

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